A

PROLOGUE:

Sent to Mr. *ROWE*,

To his new PLAY, call'd, The Fair Penitent. *Design'd to be Spoken by Mr.* Betterton; *but refus'd.*

Est & in Obscænos *deflexa Tragœdia Risus.* Ovid.

Quacks set out Bills, *Jack-Pudding* makes Harangues,
And Thief, at *Tyburn*, Speaks before he Hangs:
I pray you then give Ear to what I say,
For this to me is Execution-Day.
Tyburn the Stage is, Boxes, Galleries, Pit,
Where You, our Judges, and our Hangmen sit;
Of Nonsense tender, tho' severe to Wit.
To day we fear you not, we've hit your Taste,
And when that's pleas'd, we cannot sure be Cast.

Meanly contented with the Vulgar Way,
Some make the *Heroine*, *Virtuous* in a Play.
But the bold tragic Genius of our Stage,
With Novelty resolves t' oblige the Age,
And with a * *Heroine Punk*, the Ladies will engage.
He from the *Sock*, the *PROSITUTE* transplants,
And swells the *humble Whore* with Buskind Rants.
His Whore, indeed, repents the slippery Fault,
But, like the rest, it is not till she's caught.
She is not sorry, that sh' has plaid the *Whore*,
But, that, discover'd, she can do't no more.
Thus, while his Punk his Buskins boldly Ramps,
Like *Bajazet*, his Hero cuckol'd stares and stamps.
He with no Lawrel Wreaths his Brow adorns,
But, while those vulgar Ornaments he scorns,
Above his Brethren he exalts his Horns.
Confederate Cuckolds then come Clap this Play!
Our lucky Bard devotes to You this Day.
No * *Doodle*, * *Dashwood*, * *Wiseacre* is here,
Or any of the puny Race, that us'd t' appear;
The Cuckold now assumes a haughtier Air,
With brandish'd Dagger stabs the yielding Fair,
So little Woman's Frailty *is his Care.*
Ye horned Herd, from *Wapping* to *Whitehall*,
Approach, in Triumph, he Invites You all,
So strong a Party made, he cannot fear his Fall.

Some envious Critic here perhaps exclaims,
If you shou'd punish thus the City-Dames,
You'd make a Desolation in the Land,
And Barrs, and Counters, wou'd unfurnish'd stand.

But

* *The Heroine of his Play lies with a Fellow before Marriage, continues the Intrigue two Years after, and is propos'd, as the Picture of the Ladies by the Author, &c.*

* *The comic Cuckolds, which the Stage till now only knew.*

But, Ladies, you with Eaſe that Fear remove,
If you uſe Caution in the Theſts of Love:
Since only ſhe that's caught that Puniſhment will prove.
Danger adds Fewel to the amorous Fire,
And Difficulties only raiſe Deſire.

Beſides, paſt Merits you ſhou'd not deſpiſe,
For * *Solomon*, and * *William* in diſguiſe,
From his lov'd Pen regal'd your Ears and Eyes.
What tho' nor *Art*, nor *Nature*, there were found,
He ſcorns by *Art* or *Nature* to be bound.
Let Others toil beneath the Load of Thought
Of what is *juſt*, what Natural, what not;
They're dull, mechanic Things, below Regard,
From ſuch a *Bold*, and ſuch a *Lucky* Bard.
Uncumber'd with thoſe Fetters ſtill he'l Write,
While Ignorance enſures his Hood-wink'd Flight,
He fears no Danger, for he none foreſees,
In *happy* Ignorance ſecure to pleaſe,
Without their Forreign Aid, the indulgent Town,
With *Heroes*, and with *Language*, all his own.
The hooded Falcon, ſo, in haſt let fly,
Towrs ſwift aloft, undaunted to the Sky,
With upright Wing, till loſt to *humane Eye*.

From *THRONES* he *Sauntring*, *talking* Heroes choſe,
But for an active *Heroine* now *rakes* the *STEWS*;
And whence he'l fetch the *Next*---- he only knows.
Yet * *Creſwell*, ſure, of infamous Renown,
Or ſome more antique Matron of this Town,
May reaſonably next invoke his Pen,
To do her Juſtice in his *LOFTY SCENE*:

* *In the Step-Mother*
* *Tamerlane.*

* *A famous Bawd of 30 Years ago.*

Nor

Nor can ſhe, ſure, his *LOFTY SCENE* diſgrace,
Since Baud, in Breeding, ſtill of Whore takes Place.
For Baud's arriv'd to the grave *Doctor's State*,
While Whore is but an *Under-Graduate:*
Baud's maudlin Tone, from penetential Cart,
Like *Theſpis*, founder of the Tragic Art,
Muſt have the Force to move each *Amorous* Heart.

But what is it that Poets can not do,
Careſs'd by *Us*, and ſo Extoll'd by *You?*
T'encourage MERIT *nobly* you diſdain,
It is Pedantique, and below your Vein.
And, faith, to tell the Truth, *We* love our *Gain.*
As with the *Saints*, ſo 'tis, we find, with *You*,
For here, alaſs! th' *Elect* are very few,
And thoſe without your *Reaſon*, by your *Will* ſav'd too.
The leſs of Proper Merit they can boaſt,
The more ſecure they are from being Loſt.

While *Farce* and *Bombaſt*, beſt can pleaſe the Age,
We'l cook no other Diſhes for the Stage.
When to your Smiles *juſt* Poets y' admit,
And flock in Shoals to *Nature*, and to *Wit*;
All *Poetaſters* then we will diſcard,
And here Encourage only the *true Bard.*
For, ſure, in *Us* it muſt ſeem Impudence,
To cheriſh *Merit*, and to play *good Senſe*,
When from *YOUR Taſt* we hope for all our *Pence.*

FINIS.

22 JY 63